



**First Things First  
2010 Early Childhood Summit  
Joint Planning Session  
Participant Feedback  
August 30-31, 2010**

**Monday, August 30**

**Feedback and Recommendations on FTF Priorities**

***Process***

Participants worked from the model system charts, the list of 20 potential FTF roles in the model system, and the list of 8 priorities recommended by the Arizona Early Childhood Task Force. Participants engaged in tabletop discussions, facilitated by a FTF Regional Coordinator. Results were captured on flip charts.

***Questions and Summary of Responses***

1. What is your initial reaction to the survey results and the Task Force recommendations?

Summary of Responses

Many groups commented favorably on the focus on quality, accessibility, and affordability. Several specifically mentioned the importance of addressing health in the top priorities, including oral health and mental health. Some were surprised about the order of the top priorities, but appeared to have thought they were listed in priority order (which they were not). Some were surprised that unregulated care and early screening and intervention were not among the top priorities. Some questioned where early literacy would fit. Others suggested some lumping of priorities that were not specifically included, e.g., nutrition and physical activity, information and education for families. It was noted by some that the list of priorities matches current regional funding plans well, while others were concerned about loss of local control. Some were concerned that there were too many priorities. There were comments throughout the notes regarding the relative merits of “lumping” several discrete priorities into one larger one. Concerns were raised about smaller regions with smaller funding levels and how they could put together a system with available resources.

2. What questions do you have about the priorities?

Summary of Responses

Many of the questions posed were subsequently answered at the beginning of the Tuesday afternoon session. There were several questions about who responded to the on-line survey.

3. What do you like about the list of priorities (if not already covered in the first question)?

Summary of Responses

Comments were made about the comprehensiveness of the priorities, the fact that they addressed statutory requirements, that they would have measurable outcomes, that most regional priorities fit well with them, that they get FTF “back to its mission,” that they begin to narrow the focus and make it easier to advocate, that there was opportunity for input, that they focus on what FTF does

well and emphasize its leadership role, and that they offer opportunities for collaboration.

4. Are there roles that you would add to the list of priorities (given the definition of a priority and the reality of limited resources)? If so, which role and why? If you are proposing to add a role, is there any one you would delete to ensure that there are sufficient overall resources?

#### Summary of Responses

Four tables mentioned the importance of addressing unregulated care; some of these groups suggested including it with the priorities related to regulated care. Four tables raised the issue of data and/or evaluation, noting the importance of assessing results. As noted in response to the first question above, some groups indicated that they would like to see nutrition and physical activity, early screening and intervention, prenatal, and early/family literacy included in other priorities. The only one mentioned for exclusion was standards, curriculum, and assessment, with a notation that someone else could do this or it could be embedded in another priority.

### **Feedback and Recommendations on How FTF Should Hold Itself Accountable for Achieving Results for Children**

#### ***Process***

Participants worked from a discussion paper that outlined three considerations: 1) if and how priorities would be established, 2) how benchmarks would be established, and 3) if and how financing would be tied to priorities and/or performance. Participants engaged in tabletop discussions, facilitated by a FTF Regional Coordinator. Results were captured on flip charts.

#### ***Questions and Summary of Responses***

1. What are the implications of the various points along the three continua in terms of achieving significant outcomes for young children statewide?
2. What are the implications of the various points along the three continua in terms of how we function? (Consider coordination, funding plans, strategies, RFGAs, monitoring, etc.)
3. Other considerations?

#### Summary of Responses

Some tables noted that they were confused about the issues for discussion and felt that there were too many unknowns. Because there were three considerations (how priorities should be set, benchmarking, and financing) and two questions about each (implications for achieving results and impact of functioning), there was a lot to discuss in the time allotted. Flip chart notes reflected this challenge. It was noted that much more conversation is needed on these questions and that an inclusive, transparent process should be used. Information on how other states have addressed these questions was requested.

Issues identified included the following:

- The balance between a need for flexibility to address local needs and assets and statewide accountability
- The need for outcome data to demonstrate the effectiveness to policymakers and the public
- The need to ensure that members of Regional Councils have an important role to play and that they will be able to act in the best interests of the children in their area
- The need to ensure compliance with the statute as it relates to the roles of the Board and the Regional Councils

- Lack of Regional Council control over grantee performance with respect to achievement of benchmarks
- How funding related to benchmarks would be handled, e.g., what if a region is already at the top, what about exceeding benchmarks, would money be taken away, where would the money come from, is there a way to incentivize other than money
- How and by whom benchmarks would be set
- Concern about disincentivizing innovation and creativity
- Access to timely and accurate data related to indicators and benchmarks
- Cross-region coordination and collaboration
- State/regional trust
- Impact on small, rural, and Tribal areas

## **Tuesday, August 31**

### **Voting on FTF Priorities and How FTF Should Hold Itself Accountable for Achieving Results for Children**

#### ***Process***

Participants arranged themselves in groups of three for purposes of using the voting technology (handheld keypads). Following the votes, participants were invited to explain their vote or why they did not vote.

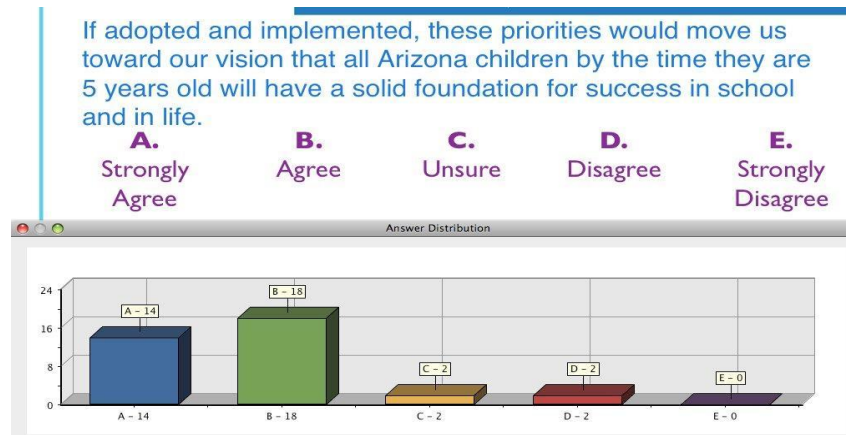
#### ***Questions and Summary of Responses (the response receiving the largest percentage of votes is shown in bold)***

*Participants were asked to answer three practice questions to familiarize themselves with the electronic voting instruments.*

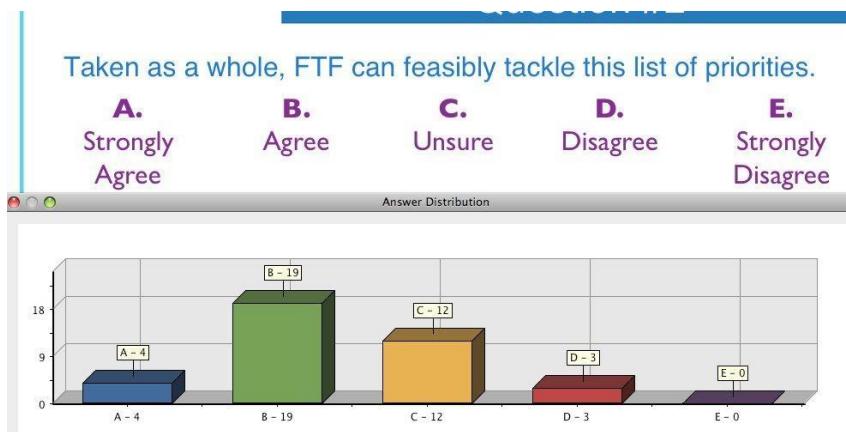
1. The first Board Chair of First Things First was:
  - a. Elliot Hibbs, 0%
  - b. **Nadine Mathis Basha, 90%** (Correct answer)
  - c. Steve Lynn, 0%
  - d. Rhian Evans Allvin, 0%
  - e. No Response, 10%
2. What was the original number of First Things First Regional Councils established in 2008?
  - a. 30 Regional Councils, 2%
  - b. 21 Regional Councils, 21% (Correct answer) (Postscript: There were also 10 Tribal Councils)
  - c. **31 Regional Councils, 67%**
  - d. No Response, 10%
3. The years from birth to age 5 are the most important in the development of a child's brain.
  - a. **Strongly Agree, 74%**
  - b. Agree, 7%
  - c. Disagree, 2%
  - d. Strongly Disagree, 5%
  - e. No Response, 12%

*Recommended Priorities (based on the Arizona Early Childhood Task Force list of recommendations: Quality, Access, and Affordability of Regulated Early Care and Education Settings; Supports and Services for Families; Building Public Awareness and Support; Professional Development System; Access to Quality Health Care Coverage and Services; Early Childhood System Funding; Early Care and Education System Development and Implementation; and Quality Early Care and Education Standards, Curriculum, and Assessment)*

1. If adopted and implemented, these priorities would move us toward our vision that all Arizona children by the time they are 5 years old will have a solid foundation for success in school and in life.
  - a. Strongly Agree, 33%
  - b. **Agree**, 43%
  - c. Disagree, 5%
  - d. Strongly Disagree, 5%
  - e. No Response, 14%

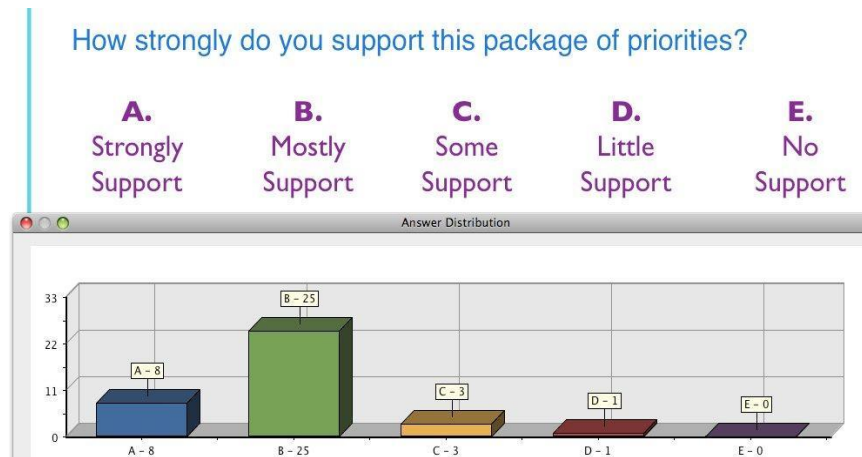


2. Taken as a whole, FTF can feasibly tackle this list of priorities.
  - a. Strongly Agree, 10%
  - b. **Agree**, 45%
  - c. Disagree, 29%
  - d. Strongly Disagree, 7%
  - e. No Response, 10%



3. How strongly do you support this package of priorities?

- a. Strongly Support, 19%
- b. **Mostly Support**, 60%
- c. Support, 7%
- d. Little Support, 2%
- e. No Support, 0%
- f. No Response, 12%



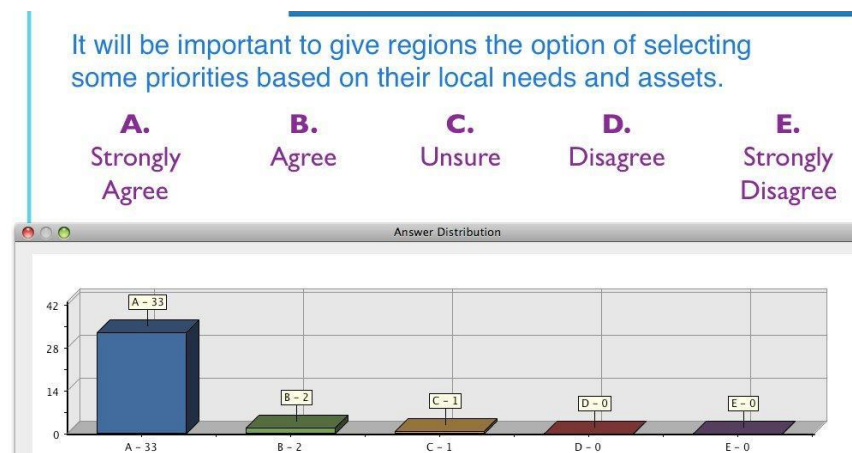
Comments on Recommended Priorities

- Concern was expressed about not including kith and kin care, early screening and intervention, and prenatal care.
- There are still too many priorities; need to narrow the list further.

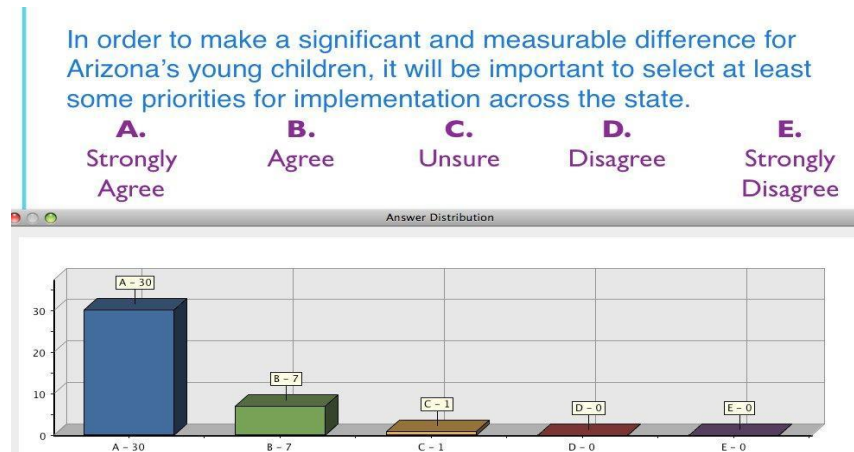
*Achieving Results for Children*

4. It will be important to give regions the option of selecting some priorities based on their local needs and assets.

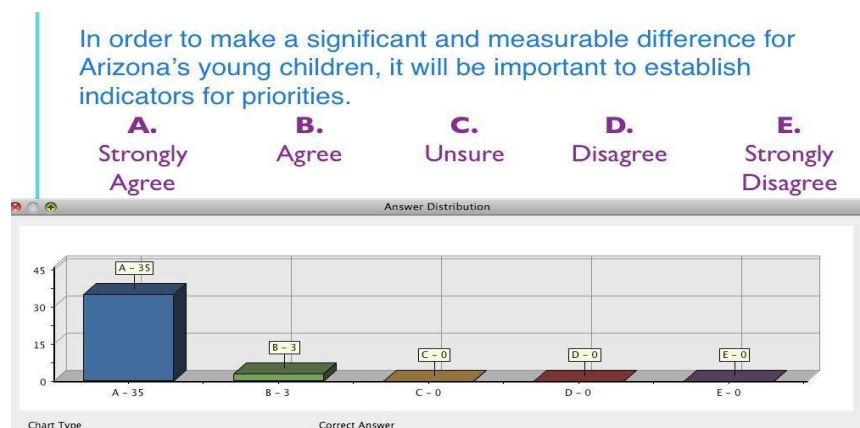
- a. **Strongly Agree**, 79%
- b. Agree, 5%
- c. Unsure, 2%
- d. Disagree, 0%
- e. Strongly Disagree, 0%
- f. No Response, 14%



5. In order to make a significant and measurable difference for Arizona's young children, it will be important to select at least some priorities for implementation across the state.
- Strongly Agree**, 71%
  - Agree, 17%
  - Unsure, 2%
  - Disagree, 0%
  - Strongly Disagree, 0%
  - No Response, 10%



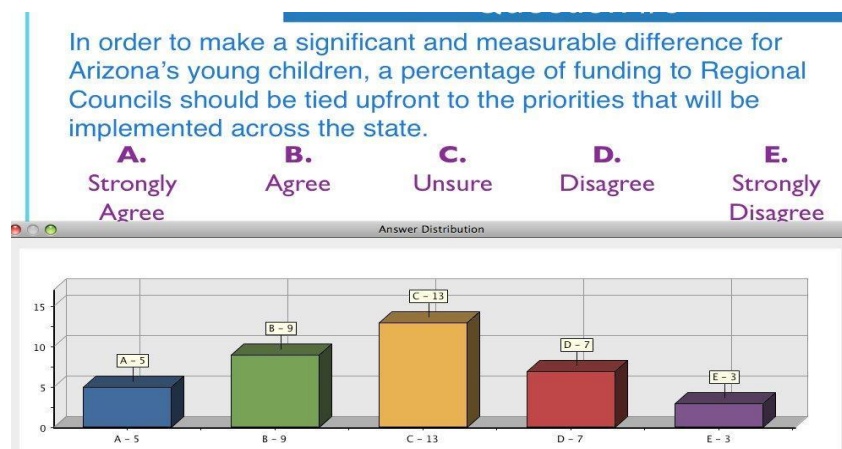
6. In order to make a significant and measurable difference for Arizona's young children, it will be important to establish indicators for priorities.
- Strongly Agree**, 83%
  - Agree, 7%
  - Unsure, 0%
  - Disagree, 0%
  - Strongly Disagree, 0%
  - No Response, 10%



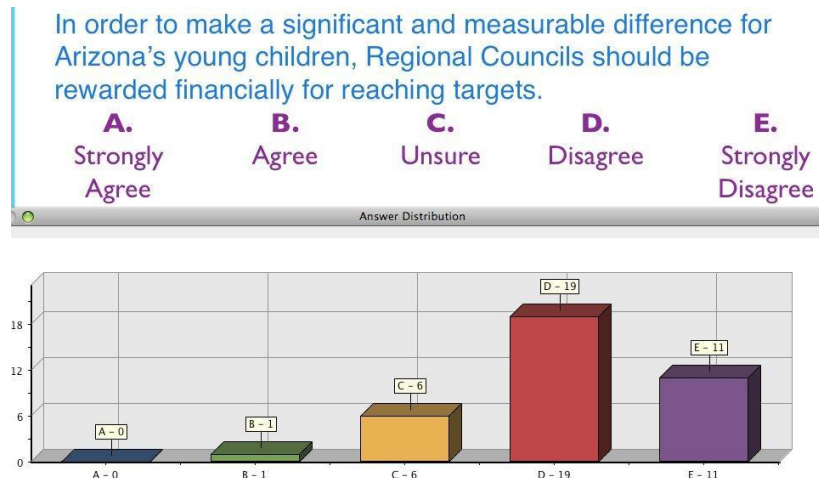
7. In order to make a significant and measurable difference for Arizona's young children, it will be important to establish targets for priorities.
- Strongly Agree**, 64%
  - Agree, 19%
  - Unsure, 5%
  - Disagree, 0%
  - Strongly Disagree, 0%
  - No Response, 12%



8. In order to make a significant and measurable difference for Arizona's young children, a percentage of funding to Regional Councils should be tied upfront to the priorities that will be implemented across the state.
- Strongly Agree, 12%
  - Agree, 21%
  - Unsure**, 31%
  - Disagree, 17%
  - Strongly Disagree, 7%
  - No Response, 12%



9. In order to make a significant and measurable difference for Arizona's young children, Regional Councils should be rewarded financially for reaching targets.
- Strongly Agree, 0%
  - Agree, 2%
  - Unsure, 14%
  - Disagree**, 45%
  - Strongly Disagree, 26%
  - No Response, 12%



#### Comments on Achieving Results for Children

- There should be priorities that are established across the state and opportunity to select some that are region-specific.
- It was noted that most regional priorities fit into those priorities recommended by the Arizona Early Childhood Task Force.
- There were questions about the balance between State and regional priorities and the impact of setting State priorities on regional funding plans.
- Concern was expressed about the impact of setting statewide priorities and setting targets on smaller regions.
- Concern was expressed about the autonomy of Regional Councils.
- The importance of collaboration and partnership throughout the state was highlighted.
- With respect to indicators and targets, questions were asked about how targets would be set and by whom and whether these would be absolute or a percentage increase from the regional baseline.
- Concern was expressed about being held accountable for performance when it is not in the direct control of the Regional Council.
- A request was made to see what other states have done to achieve results for children. Early Childhood Consultant Karen Ponder commented on the importance and value of establishing some common indicators and targets and showing measurable progress over time.



*Additional Questions (posed contemporaneously based on questions raised in the comment section following the votes on Achieving Results for Children)*

10. If a percent of funding were to be directed toward priorities across the state, what percent do you recommend?

- a. **0-25%**, 55%
- b. 26-50%, 19%
- c. 51-75%, 5%
- d. 76-100%, 7%
- e. No Response, 14%

